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REPUBLICAN AND INDEPENDENT HEADQUARTERS
166 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, JULY 24, 1858.

My dear Sir:—

We enclose with this a copy of the address adopted by the National Conference of Republicans and Independents, held at New York, July 17, 1858. This address was adopted unanimously, and we send it to you as the official utterance of the Conference.

DARWIN E. WAKE, *Chairman Executive Committee,*
MOSES WILLIAMS, *Secretary.*

Executive Committee.

William H. Forbes, Samuel Hoar, Moorfield Storey, Phineas Pierce, Jabez Fox, George V. Leverett, F. F. Raymond, 2d, Charles P. Fox, Stephen M. Weld, Samuel M. Quincy, Winslow Warren, Geo. Fred. Williams, Charles C. Jackson, Archibald M. Howe, A. J. C. Sowdon.

ADDRESS.

To our Fellow Citizens of the United States:—

The paramount issue of the Presidential election of this year is moral rather than political. It concerns the national honor and character and honesty of administration rather than the general policies of government, upon which the platforms of the two parties do not essentially differ. No position taken by one platform is seriously traversed by the other. Both evidently contemplate a general agreement of public opinion upon subjects which have been long in controversy, and indicate an unwillingness to declare, upon other and cardinal questions, views which in the present condition of opinion might seriously disturb the parties within themselves. Parties indeed now cohere mainly by habit and tradition; and, since the great issues which have divided them have been largely settled, the most vital political activity has been the endeavor of good citizens, in both parties, to adjust them to living issues, and to make them effective agencies of political progress and reform. The indispensable necessity of this course has long been apparent: for, in a time of profound peace at home and abroad, the most threatening national peril is an insidious political corruption, a mercenary and demoralizing spirit and

tendency, the result of what is well described by Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, as the shameless doctrine "that the true way by which power should be gained in the Republic is to bribe the people with the offices created for their service, and the true end for which it should be used when gained is the promotion of selfish ambition and the gratification of personal revenge." But this doctrine naturally has produced results which are still more alarming. The corrupt spirit and tendency have so rapidly developed that they seek political power not only to gratify ambition and revenge, but to promote private gain. They deride appeals to the public conscience, defend the soiled reputations of public men by the bold assertion that all public men are equally guilty, declare that success in obtaining eminent position disposes of every imputation and suspicion of wrong-doing, and, despising all practical measures to reform the system of official patronage which fosters dishonest politics, make a great party nominally responsible for prolonged and monstrous fraud, and proclaim that it is the duty of every citizen who, for great and beneficent ends, has habitually supported a party, to regard the success of the party at an election, without regard to the character of those whom it selects as its executive agents, to be a supreme national necessity. A tendency more fatal to the public welfare cannot be conceived; and when, by public indifference or misunderstanding, this corrupt spirit is able to demand that the country shall approve it by according to it the highest honor in its gift, every patriotic citizen must perceive that no duty could be more pressing, vital, and imperative than that of baffling and defeating the demand.

If the Republican Convention had presented a candidate whose character and career were the pledge of a resolute contest with the tendencies that we have described, if they had foretold a stern dealing with political corruption and a vigorous correction of the vast abuses which the long and undisturbed tenure of power by any party is sure to breed, if the success of the candidate had promised inflexible honesty of administration, purification of the government, and elevation of the party standard, every Republican voter would gladly have supported the nomination. But these are precisely the anticipations which the nomination forbids. It offers a candidate who is an unfit leader, shown by his own words and his acknowledged acts, which are of official record, to be unworthy of respect and confidence; who has traded upon his official trust for his pecuniary gain; a representative of men, methods, and conduct which the public conscience condemns, and which illustrate the very evils which honest men would reform. Such a nomination does not promise in the executive chair, inflexible official integrity, calm and wise judgment, a sole regard for the public welfare, and an unshinking determination to promote reform in the civil service, and ceaselessly to pursue and punish public robbers of every kind and degree. Independent voters have generally supported Republican nominations, as more surely promising reform than those of the Democratic party. Independents, however, cannot support a nomination which is the culmination of the tendency that they would correct. Republicans cannot hope that, under such leadership as we have mentioned, the abuses of the past can be corrected or the party reformed. We are very proud of the great record and services of the Republican party, but not with our consent or connivance shall that record be disgraced.

Every party must be constantly renewed by the intelligent independence of its own members, or it will sink from an agency to secure good

government into a remorseless despotism. The Republican party first sprang from a moral sentiment. It was the party of political morality and of personal liberty. It appealed directly to the conscience of the citizen. But, like all parties, it was a political agency, not to be worshipped, but to be carefully held to the spirit and purposes in which and for which it was organized. "I do not know," said Mr. Seward thirty years ago, when he left the Whig party to join the Republicans, "I do not know that it will always or even long preserve its courage, its moderation, and its consistency. If it shall do so, it will secure and save the country. If it, too, shall become unfaithful, as all preceding parties have done, it will without sorrow or regret on my part perish as they are perishing, and will give place to another truer and better one." This warning must not be forgotten. It is with profound conviction of its wisdom that Republicans faithful to their party, but holding with the great Republican fathers that political morality and purity of administration are more precious than party, are now constrained to oppose the Republican Presidential nomination in the interest of what they believe to be pure Republicanism, the public welfare and the honor of the American name.

The Republican nomination has for the time superseded all other issues by raising the question of official honesty. This question cannot be avoided except upon the plea that the official character of the candidates need not be considered, and that, in order to secure a party President, the members of a party ought to vote for any candidate who has been regularly nominated. This is a plea beyond which party madness cannot go. Acquiescence in it would require the surrender of the self-respect of every voter. There could be no candidate so unfit that this plea would not demand his support; and Republican success, justified by an argument which defies the public conscience, would be the overthrow of the vital principle of the party, and show that the spirit and character which created its great traditions are rapidly perishing.

Upon the practical questions of tariff and finance and other questions upon which both parties are divided within themselves, we also are divided in opinion. We shall vote therefore in the choice of representatives and other officers according to our individual opinions of their political views and their personal character. Divided on other questions, we are united in the conviction that the fountain of office and honor should be pure, and that the highest office in the country should be filled by a man of absolutely unsuspected integrity. As there is no distinctive issue upon public policy presented for the consideration of the country, the character of the candidates becomes of the highest importance with all citizens who do not hold that party victory should be secured at any cost.

While the Republican nomination presents a candidate whom we cannot support, the Democratic party presents one whose name is the synonym of political courage and honesty and of administrative reform. He has discharged every official trust with a sole regard to the public welfare, and with a just disregard of mere partisan and personal advantage, which, with the applause and confidence of both parties, have raised him from the chief executive administration of a great city to that of a great State. His unreserved, intelligent, and sincere support of reform in the civil service has firmly established that reform in the State and cities of New York; and his personal convictions, proved by his official acts more decisive than any possible platform declarations, are the guarantee that in its spirit and in its letter the reform would be enforced in the national admin-

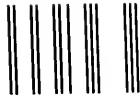


istration. His high sense of duty, his absolute and unchallenged official integrity, his inflexible courage in resisting party pressure and public outcry, his great experience in the details of administration, and his commanding executive ability and independence are precisely the qualities which the political situation demands in the chief executive officer of the government, to resist corporate monopoly on the one hand and demagogic communism on the other, and at home and abroad, without menace or fear, to protect every right of American citizens and to respect every right of friendly States, by making political morality and private honesty the basis of constitutional administration.

He is a Democrat who is happily free from all association with the fierce party differences of the slavery contest, and whose financial views are in harmony with those of the best men in both parties; and, coming into public prominence at a time when official purity, courage, and character are of chief importance, he presents the qualities and the promise which independent voters desire, and which a great body of Republicans, believing those qualities to be absolutely indispensable in the administration of the government at this time, do not find in the candidate of their own party.

Such independent voters do not propose to ally themselves inextricably with any party. Such Republicans do not propose to abandon the Republican party nor to merge themselves in any other party; but they do propose to aid in defeating a Republican nomination which, not for reasons of expediency only, but for high moral and patriotic considerations, with a due regard for the Republican name and for the American character, was unfit to be made. They desire not to evade the proper responsibility of American citizens by declining to vote, and they desire also to make their votes as effective as possible for honest and pure and wise administration. How can such voters who at this election cannot conscientiously support the Republican candidate promote the objects which they desire to accomplish more surely than by supporting the candidate who represents the qualities, the spirit, and the purpose which they all agree in believing to be of controlling importance in this election? No citizen can rightfully avoid the issue or refuse to cast his vote. The ballot is a trust. Every voter is a trustee for good government, bound to answer to his private conscience for his public acts.

This Conference, therefore, assuming that Republican and independent voters, who for any reason cannot sustain the Republican nomination, desire to take the course which, under the necessary conditions and constitutional methods of a Presidential election, will most readily and surely secure the result at which they aim, respectfully recommends to all such citizens to support the electors who will vote for Grover Cleveland, in order most effectually to enforce their conviction that nothing could more deeply stain the American name and prove more disastrous to the public welfare than the deliberate indifference of the people of the United States to increasing public corruption and to the want of official integrity in the highest trusts of the government.



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